OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN NGOs AND THE UK RNR SCIENCE BASE.

Viet Nam Country Case Study
16 July to 7 August 1997

DRAFT

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September 1997

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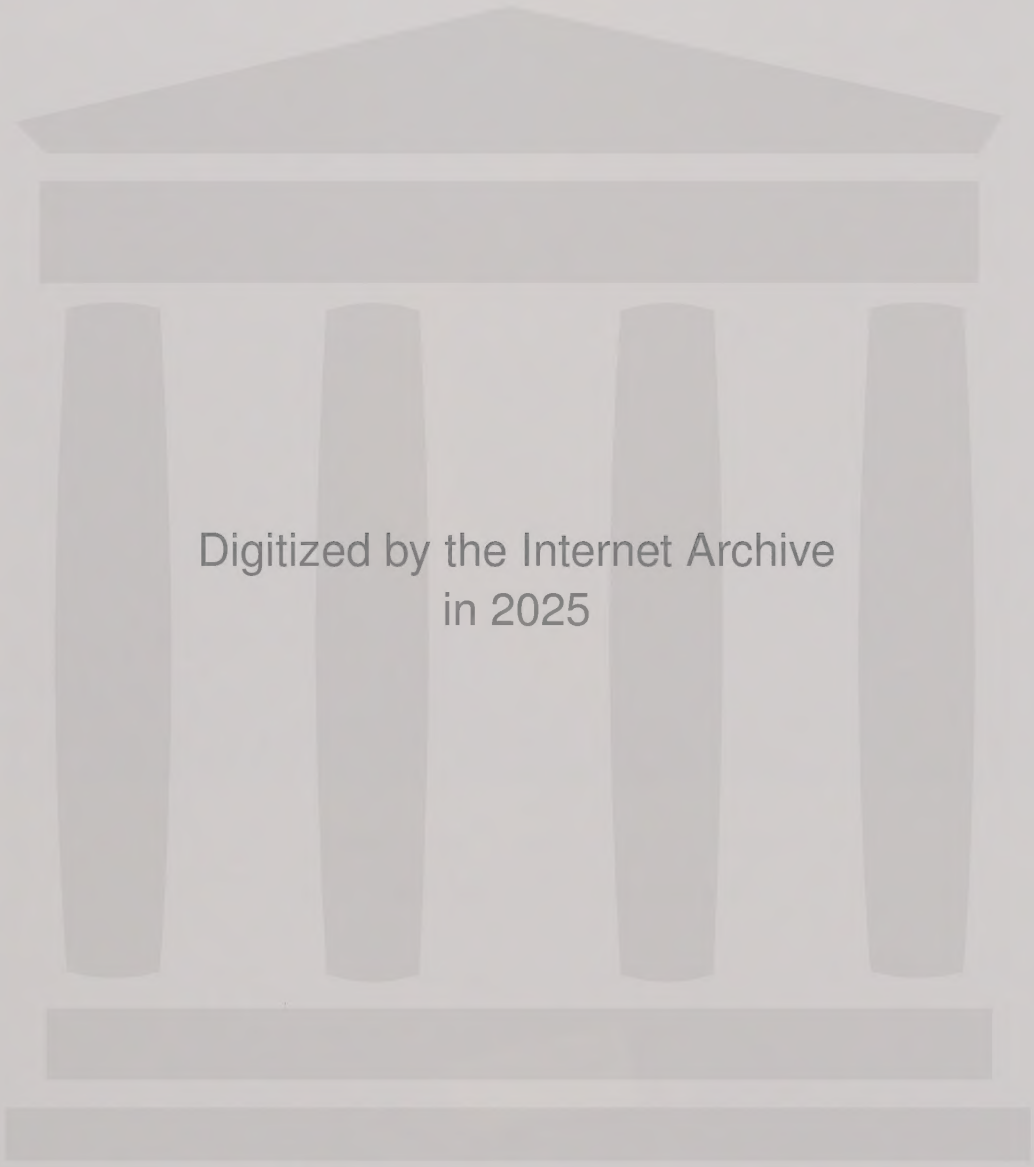
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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS USED

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
ASSC	Advisory and Support Service Contract
CIDSE	Cooperation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidarité
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CIRAD	Centre International our la Recherche Agricole et le Developpement
CRES	Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development
ECO-ECO	Institute of Ecological Economy
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FADO	Flemish Orgaisation for Assistance in Development
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques
HELVETAS	Swiss Association for International Cooperation
IDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre.
IIS	Institute of Irrigation Studies, (Southampton University, UK)
INGO	International Non Government Organisation
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment
NIAPP	National Institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection
NR	natural resources
ORSTOM	Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Ôutre-Mer
PACCOM	People's Aid Co-ordinating Committee
SCF	Save the Children Federation
SEADD	South East Asian Development Division
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAC	an acronym formed from the 3 Vietnamese words : V - garden or orchard, A - fish pond, C - pigsty or poultry shed
VACVINA	The Association of Vietnamese gardeners
VNEAP	Vietnamese National Environmental Action Plan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of the case study wish to point out that eighteen days is a very restricted time in which to undertake sufficient representative interviews with NGOs, academic institutions, centres and government departments dealing with natural resource issues. However our task of gaining an overall impression and discerning general trends and patterns was made a good deal easier by the openness and willingness to talk with those whom we contacted and by the availability of a good standard of communications.

Grateful thanks are due to all the representatives of NGOs, government establishments, universities,colleges and independant institutions who took time out of their busy schedules to receive us and patiently answer our persistent questioning.

The adminstrative staff of The British Embassy, Hanoi provided valuable assistance in obtaining our visas and despatching our collection of documents and references whilst staff of SEADD provided a useful insight to project work in Viet Nam.

We also wish to thank the team leaders of the overall study for their contributions and suggestions whilst writing this report and to the secretarial support received from other staff at NRI.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT ON VISIT TO VIET NAM CASE STUDY FOR AIM 3 NGO 16 JULY - 7 AUGUST 1997

Introduction

This report describes the activities undertaken in Viet Nam during the first case study on how NGOs make use of natural resources research knowledge in a developing country undergoing rapid transition from a closed communist society to a more open regime. During the 18 day stay in Hanoi interviews were undertaken with a selection of 14 of the many different NGOs that are present in the country, with 3 international organisations, 7 government departments, institutions and centres and with 10 sections of 5 different universities and colleges in the region.

Views were obtained from persons working across a range of natural resource sectors including : water resources planning, agriculture, forestry, environmental impact assessment, animal husbandry, crop breeding land planning and economics and soil enrichment.

NGOs in Viet Nam

The term NGO is applied loosely to a wide variety of different organisations in Viet nam. Distinctions need to be made between the 400 different NGOs operating there in order to better understand how they make use of natural resources information. The report distinguishes between and describes the characteristics of foreign or international NGOs and local associations or institutes.

The associations are often organised around a theme such as a natural resource sector being composed mainly of retired or government employees who have come together with a common interest in their subject. The institutes tend to reflect a more active role in research and consultancy work. They may in fact be part of an academic institution but have a considerable amount of autonomy.

The government of Viet Nam retains some control over the activities of NGOs by requiring them to register with the People's Aid Co-ordination Committee (PACCOM). The significance of the different levels of registration are described in more detail in the report.

The creation and nature of the NGO Resource Centre, is briefly described. It is a useful source of references. The centre is currently publishing the sixth edition of The Viet Nam NGO Directory which is much in demand.

NGOs' Work in The Natural Resources Sector

Both through personal contact and through reviewing relevant literature, it was clear that larger NGOs are focusing on promotion of sustainable agriculture, forest conservation practices for biodiversity and watershed protection in specific provinces of the upland areas of the country inhabited by the poorest, ethnic minority groups.

Allocation of land to individuals and resettlement schemes add to the problems of managing a transition from swidden to permanent cultivation of the upland areas.

Though the earth and natural resource science base in Viet Nam seems to be strong, NGOs are seen as playing an important role in introducing effective participatory methodologies in the establishment and operation of the extension services.

Sources of Advice for NGOs

Across government and academia there is a plethora of competing centres and institutes all offering up their services as consultants to donors and NGOs alike. Specific examples are reviewed in the report.

Several NGOs interviewed did employ local Vietnamese consultants relating to the introduction of new activities or the use of new varieties in upland areas. One NGO had contracted a local researcher to work with extension staff and farmers to popularise the introduction and use of micro biofertiliser.

Local consultants tend to be good at collecting data and carrying out surveys but less skilled in interpreting the meaning of that data for the benefit of local communities.

On the side of the consultants, while some people were happy to accept the fees that they were offered, viewing their work more as a service to the people of their country, others felt that the contracts with NGOs were low paid, too short term and too restrictive in not allowing the individual to benefit from the work undertaken in other directions.

Some NGOS did not appear interested in making attempts to create partnerships with the institutions to which the individuals belonged but rather just exploiting the expertise that was available.

Some multi-lateral organisations and NGOs discovered that the advice that they required was often patchy and not easily obtained. However, Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES) is noteworthy as being well renowned and as having a reputation for high quality natural resource work.

Provision of Actual External Advice and Perception of its Need by NGOs

NGOs and multi-lateral organisations which had strong links to aid agency funds were able to employ expatriate consultants on specialist issues. British social forestry experts were recently used during a training needs assessment and planning of a social forestry support programme to the Viet Nam Forestry College. A British agro-economist formed part of a multi-disciplinary, multi-racial team evaluating a programme of mangrove planting sponsored by an international NGO.

Whilst UNDP clearly stated that they brought in foreign experts to expose local people to approaches and methods from other parts of the world, NGOs tended to rely upon advice from within the region if not within the country.

Sources and Use of Social Science Expertise by NGOs in Development Work.

The dearth of social science expertise to establish effective communication with local communities in Viet Nam was mentioned on several occasions by different NGOs. The report describes the actions being taken by some NGOs to remedy this and points to reasons as to why this has come about.

Issues and Recommendations.

The report indicates that whilst there is not a major unmet demand for technical scientific expertise that can be supplied by UK research institutions, issues arise about how NGOS can learn about and access local expertise. There is potential for NGOs to influence research agendas through establishing partnerships and with local academic institutions.

There is perceived to be a lack of local Vietnamese expertise in social development and participatory methodologies.

NGOs in Viet Nam would benefit from access to formal and informal international networks on natural science topics set up with the intention of disseminating relevant NR research information. Such networks need to be better supported if they are going to operate reliably.

Researchers in Viet Nam have an acute problem of organising storage, proper cataloguing and retrieval of information. Local scientific papers which could be useful to project workers are often produced in small print runs and can disappear from general circulation within a short space of time.

Science institutes and centres in Viet Nam are in need of assistance in editing skills for scientific papers and literature in preparation for publishing in international journals.

1. Introduction

Though not listed as a target country for DIFD-funded RNRRS research, Viet Nam numbers amongst the poorest countries in the world. In early 1994 the US lifted the three decade old trade embargo against Hanoi and European and Asian companies poured into Vietnam seeking investment opportunities. The country experienced a great increase in the level of assistance from NGOs, bilateral and multi-lateral donors in the early nineties in an era of post communist liberalisation. Indeed the country appears to be suffering from an ability to absorb all the help that is on offer. The choice of Viet Nam as a case study country was motivated, in part, by the surge of interest shown and high level of NGO presence there.

2. NGOs In Viet Nam

2.1 There are a large number of NGOs in Viet Nam. Most of these are foreign NGOs which have in the main arrived within the last 10-15 years; the growing interest in Vietnam has meant that more foreign NGOs are setting up in Viet Nam all the time. There are also local organisations known as 'associations' (defined by a member of staff as mobilising people to achieve an end) or 'institutes' (defined as consisting of experts of many kinds) which class themselves as NGOs but which are not generally so classed by foreign NGOs because they have close links with government in the sense that their staff are usually people who are or were employed by the government at universities or ministries and who tend to follow government policy. There are also organisations like the Women's Union and Youth Groups which are organised through the government network and should perhaps be seen as branches of the government. Some academic institutions, including the research institute Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES), consider themselves to some extent to be NGOs although they are associated with a university.

2.2 As part of our visit, 13 foreign NGOs (Action Aid, Oxfam UK, Save the Children UK, Save the Children UK, CIDSE [Cooperation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidarité], CRS [Catholic Relief Services], FADO [Flemish Organisation for Assistance in Development], GRET [Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques], HELVETAS, IUCN, World Neighbours and World Vision International) working in the natural resources sector were interviewed, mostly face to face and a few by telephone, and four local NGO-like organisations, two of which were 'associations' (Vacvina, which promotes the VAC system[1] and the Vietnam Economic Association), one an 'institute' (Eco-Eco, the 'Institute of Ecological Economy', which sets up eco-villages) and one a 'consulting centre' (Consulting Centre for Environmental Protection and Technology Transfer, which deals with health and environmental aspects of dioxin residues.)

2.3 There is a certain level of suspicion of NGOs on the part of the government, and foreign NGOs are quite tightly controlled by the government. They must register with PACCOM, a government-run umbrella agency set up to monitor and assess the

[1] The VAC system is a traditional Vietnamese system which involves the cultivation of vegetables, the raising of ducks and small scale fish farming in a co-ordinated and interdependent fashion.

activities of foreign NGOs. There are three different levels of registration with People's Aid Co-ordination Committee (PACCOM). The lowest, a permit for operation, allows an NGO to run projects; the second level allows a project office to be established in a specific area; the highest level allows the NGO to establish a representative office in Hanoi. This highest level is, we were told, highly prized because it allows greater visibility and more effective operation both within Viet Nam and outside it. It is not likely to be granted to an NGO newly arrived in Viet Nam. PACCOM demands that foreign NGOs demonstrate that they are working with Vietnamese partners. In effect this means working with a government body at least one level (national, regional, provincial or communal). The number of expatriate and local staff is specified in the permit granted and so is the location of the project office, where such an office is permitted to the NGO. Each project and programme has to be approved by the Chair of the People's Committee at provincial level for programmes under US$50,000, by the Ministry of Finance for programmes from US$50,000 - US$200,000, and by the Chairman of the Ministers' Council (the Prime Minister) for programmes over US$200,000.

2.4 An NGO Resource Centre has recently been established in Hanoi to help provide an information and networking service for NGOs. It was established in Spring 1993 by a group of International NGOs active in Viet Nam with co-operation from the Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organisations as well as PACCOM (the People's Aid Co-ordinating Committee), the two bodies responsible for management of International Non Government Organisations (INGOs). The Centre however is a membership organisation with currently 85 INGO members. It is funded by the INGOs themselves, through membership fees and through funding from two INGOs. One value output from The Centre is the production of The Viet Nam NGO Directory, now into its sixth edition, the aim of which is " to increase knowledge in Viet Nam and overseas about international NGOs working in The Country and to help foster communication among these NGOs, Government of Viet Nam, local groups and other international organisations. The Centre seems to be well-used and to be a valuable resource in a context where information is often difficult to obtain (see sections 7.13 and 12.10). It is the focus of a number of informal local networks and groups, including those on Agroforestry and Sustainable Agriculture, a Gender and Development group and an Ethnic Minorities working group. These groups meet irregularly. The mission was not able to pursue these in enough detail to say how active or effective they are.

3. Relative Donor and NGO Roles in Environmental Projects: Data From The UNDP 'Compendium of Environmental Projects 1985-'95

3.1 The writing of the Viet Nam National Environmental Action Plan (VNEAP) a couple of years ago has spurred on the need to document and provide an overview of all the organisations involved in environmental work. This has led to the production of a "Compendium of Environmental Projects in Viet Nam 1985 - 1995" compiled through the UNDP.

3.2 Some data emerges from this document about the relative assistance provided by NGOs compared with multi-laterals and bilateral donors (although it should be pointed out that no definition of an NGO is given). Although NGOs provided only 6%

of total aggregate project assistance, they supported 32% of the total number of projects examined (i.e. 81 out of 252). Many of these had a value of under US$20,000. When the 15 largest projects are analysed separately from the remaining 237 small projects the relative shares of donor activity change with NGO project commitments rising from 6 % to 16%, the bilateral share from 41% to 50% and the multilateral share falling from 53% to 34%.

3.3 The large projects and many smaller NGO projects are focused on specific provinces and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry practices. Other small projects concentrate more on the institutional, administrative and policy structures which provide the framework for environmental protection and management.

3.4 The VNEAP programme areas distinguish projects which include "grassroots" and development projects (which can be very large) and institutional building and policy reform projects (which are typically smaller). Upland conservation of forests for biodiversity, watershed protection and the stabilisation of coastline and improvement of protection from typhoons dominate the multilateral commitments, accounting for 77% of total multi-lateral commitments. By comparison, bilateral donors are more active in programmes categorised as tackling 'urban master plans', 'pollution of cities' and 'industry and public and professional awareness' where they have provided 92% of total programme commitments. Not surprisingly, within the NNEAP, NGOs focus on grassroots VNEAP programmes involving upland forests/watershed protection, (55% of the NGO total) income generation in hill areas, (12% of the NGO total) coastline and protection from typhoons (12% of the NGO total) and sustainable agricultural practices (19% of the NGO total).

4. NGOs' Work In The Natural Resources Sector

4.1 From the NGO Directory published by the NGO Resource Centre in Hanoi, it is clear that a number of the foreign NGOs operating in Viet Nam do at least part of their work in the natural resources sector. Those interviewed were selected using this as a guideline as well as information from the three British NGOs with whom contact had been made from the UK (Oxfam, Action Aid and Save the Children Fund [SCF]).

4.2 We found that a major area of work for foreign NGOs in Viet Nam working in the NR sector at the moment is the introduction of participatory methodologies in the establishment and operation of the extension services which have now been set up in theory in all of Viet Nam. This is combined with substantive work relating to the introduction of new methodologies such as new varieties of crop, IPM methods etc. Vietnamese working in government ministries and universities were widely found to see foreign NGOs as playing an important role in introducing effective participatory techniques. The need for this input is related to the lack of a tradition of extension in Viet Nam (see below, section 11.3)

4.3 Foreign NGOs now often work in upland areas; it would appear that the government, having previously made access to those areas difficult, is now encouraging foreign NGOs to work there, believing them to have appropriate skills. One of the major environmental and human natural resource utilisation problems in Viet Nam is that of agricultural overuse of these upland areas due to population expansion (some natural and some due to in-migration assisted by the government

from lowland delta areas), which is making the traditional shifting cultivation system unsustainable, especially when combined with the extraction of timber by local people and by commercial companies - this last seems to be taking place although usually not officially. Thus, foreign NGOs in Viet Nam working in NR are tackling management of the transition from swidden to permanent cultivation (either of wet rice on flat land or, probably more importantly, of permanent non-grain crops on sloping land) and the introduction of sustainable methodologies for using the little forest which remains in many areas.

5. DFID Support for RNR Work in Vietnam

5.1 The main initiative of DFID's South East Asia Development Division (SEADD) in the renewable natural resources sector in Viet Nam is a new project which will work through three British NGOs: Oxfam, Save the Children and Action Aid. These will be implementing various measures intended to tackle poverty in the province of Ha Tinh some 400 km south of Hanoi. Some of the measures relate to natural resources utilisation, particularly the strengthening of sea dikes.

5.2 Rather than ask the participating NGOs to deal directly with consultants providing technical advice - because of sensitivities over the high rates paid to foreign consultants - SEADD will identify consultants in specialist subjects to work with Hanoi Water Resources University, with the intention of strengthening the ability to provide appropriate expertise for the project and ultimately other projects too. This institution has been providing engineering design advice for the strengthening and raising of sea dike walls along the coastal provinces of Viet Nam seasonally affected by typhoons. A member of staff from the School of Aquaculture at Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok (AIT) recently visited Ha Tinh together with the NR adviser at SEADD, but it is not yet clear in what way AIT may be involved in the Ha Tinh work.

6. UK and other Non-Vietnamese Scientific Institutions' Involvement in Viet Nam

6.1 There is a strong natural scientific tradition in Viet Nam. Given this, the demand for direct UK - or other foreign - natural science institutional involvement in Vietnam does not appear to be that great.

6.2 Input from UK experts has been largely in the field of Social Forestry. HELVETAS has brought in a number of UK consultants in their support of training in social forestry. These have included consultants from University of Bangor on training needs assessment and those from the University of Reading on research methods, curriculum development and forestry extension who were also involved in the national workshop which was organised in Sep-Oct 1996 on social forestry; a freelancer, in a social forestry identification mission; a consultant formerly of the University of Wolverhampton, for the preparation of the strategic plan for the social forestry programme.

6.3 In an effort to provide a greater appreciation of environmental issues in the water sector, the Institute of Irrigation Studies (IIS), University of Southampton, funded indirectly by ADB, carried out training of trainer inputs to courses for water engineers and planners in Hanoi last year.

6.4 Other external help has included that coming from Los Banos University in the Philippines through which two visiting lecturers in Social Forestry Project Management and Land Use Technologies will be taking up posts shortly. In addition, The Ford Foundation is supporting improved fallow management for shifting cultivation, something which CIFOR in Bogor is also supporting. Helvetas has used the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in the Philippines, and also the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre in Bangkok, in its support for social forestry.

6.5 GRET, an NGO which carries out projects in Vietnam but also concentrates on bringing in expertise from outside and particularly from France, has links with the regional programme in IRRI which works on assessing the trend for yield decrease in rice based cropping systems. They hope to get access to expertise from this and to work out what local expertise there is in Vietnam at the October seminar which is being held here in Vietnam involving IRRI, CIRAD, ORSTOM and Vietnamese research institutes working in the Red River Delta. This seminar is part of the establishment an 'Eco Regional Initiative for Humid and Sub-Humid, Tropical and Sub-Tropical Asia' by IRRI.

6.6 We made a visit to the School of Environment, Resources and Development and to the Centre of Language and Educational Technology at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. The Aquaculture Outreach Programme covering South East Asia, including Vietnam, was discussed with Professor Peter Edwards and his colleagues. The school collaborates with both the Universities of Reading and Stirling. In Vietnam AIT are collaborating with institutes and research centres rather than working directly with NGOs, although there is the possibility that they may be assisting in the design of the DFID-funded NGO project in Ha Tinh in which Oxfam UK, SCF UK and Action Aid will be participating..

6.7 Most NGOs, as discussed below (section 7.2) do not use much natural scientific expertise from abroad; however, Helvetas is notable in having used a number of UK consultants. Helvetas is able to use foreign consultants more than many other NGOs in Vietnam because it is well funded, and they use UK consultants because they are cheaper than Swiss consultants, which would be their most obvious source.

6.8 There seems to be a low level of involvement in networks such as the IPM Forum or the Tropical Forest Forum on the part of either academic institutions or NGOs, and no mention was made of access to sources of advice and information within the UK such as that at Kew by any of the NGOs. Some NGOs did participate in networks but this did not seem a very significant area. It was not apparent that academic institutions, either, had much to do with formal networks, although individuals had informal contacts, both within South East Asia and with colleagues in other parts of the world, particularly where they had studied or worked overseas.

6.9 Where NGOs did say that they had used networks they also said that they had found the supply of information patchy and irregular. Individuals had wondered why they had stopped hearing from the IPM Forum.

7. NGOS and Local Partners

7.1 While all foreign NGOs work in some way with local partners - this is a condition of their working in Viet Nam - some concentrate on working at national and regional levels, while others work mostly at lower levels. At national level, partners may be academic institutions or ministries, to whom assistance may be given to develop training courses, for example the assistance given by HELVETAS in setting up social forestry courses at Forestry Colleges; at provincial level, they may be local academic institutions who provide expertise for projects. At provincial, regional and communal level project partners are often government agricultural staff and extension services. Most foreign NGOs work at least to some extent at field level and few work entirely at national level.

8. Sources of Natural Scientific Advice used by NGOs in their Natural Resources Sector Work

8.1. NGOs have different kinds of staff: those who are long-term, who are usually expatriate, and those taken on for a specific project, who are often local. Long-term staff may be specialists in a certain area in the NR sector but it is more likely that they will be generalists. Local staff are often specialists in the NR area in which a given NR project for which they are taken on is focused. There is a good supply of trained specialists in many relevant natural science areas in Viet Nam, and no difficulty in getting staff for projects. It is likely that it is more difficult to get good staff in some areas than in others although we did not get any data on this. It also is said to be difficult to get staff in some cases to work in remote areas, and expatriate staff are sometimes taken on in such cases for this reason.

8.2 Where they need short-term outside assistance in designing, implementing and monitoring the natural scientific input into programmes and projects, there is a general tendency among NGOs working in Vietnam to use local expertise from ministries and academic institutions in natural scientific areas. Very often, provincial level expertise, either government or from local academic institutions, is used by NGOs. The Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (MOSTE) has compiled a list of national consultants on environmental issues. However, often consultants are identified through local partners or other links rather than through registers of consultants.

8.3 Vietnamese staff are used partly because they are cheaper but also because Vietnamese expertise is judged to be good in natural science and because of Vietnamese sensitivity to the idea of using outside expertise where local expertise is available. The exceptions, among the NGOs to whom we spoke, were HELVETAS, which is well-funded, which uses a number of international experts in natural scientific areas related to NR. GRET also brings in French experts who are do the work as part of their work as French civil servants and are not paid separately for it. International organisations such as UNDP and the World Food Programme, also use international experts.

8.4 We contacted and interviewed representatives of relevant Ministries and academic institutions to look at patterns of consultancy advice, and to obtain the views of staff of these institutions on this.
We spoke to representatives of seven government bodies of which six (Department of Water Resources and Hydraulic Works Management, Institute for Water Resources

Planning, Institute of Hydrology and Meteorology, National Institute of Animal Husbandry, Institute for Agricultural Planning and Projecting) fall under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development created in late 1996, which has responsibility for natural resources, and one (Environmental Technology and EIA Division of the National Environment Agency) under the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment created in 1992 with responsibility for environmental matters. We also interviewed representatives of three universities (Hanoi Agricultural University, Vietnam National University and Hanoi Water Resources University) and a college (Vietnam College of Forestry, Xuan Mai). In addition, we interviewed staff of the Schools of Aquaculture and Remote Sensing at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand, which have outreach programmes in Vietnam.

8.5 While both the line organisations of ministries and universities which may be considered part of Government of Vietnam provide advice, the picture is made more complicated by the existence of departments in both bodies often being labelled as "institutes" and "centres". These labels imply more autonomy in the way they are managed and perhaps more flexibility with whom they can create partnerships and relationships.

8.6 A Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development (MARD) has recently been created. This is a super ministry with responsibility for looking after the sectors of water resources, agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry and more besides. Many large development projects funded by Asian Development Bank and World Bank are managed from within MARD.

8.7 CRES, is a research institute which is attached to the University of Hanoi but has a semi-autonomous status and receives funding from the Ford Foundation, is building up a small library due to its funding from Ford and its links with the East-West Centre made possible through this funding. CRES was acknowledged by the representatives of international organisations and NGOs that we interviewed as one of the leading, innovative and open bodies in Vietnam in being able to field specialists in natural resources management issues and research. By contrast, though the ministerial bodies do have well qualified individuals working for them, they do tend to be more bureaucratic in their procedures.

8.8 There is considerable competition amongst these institutes and centres in trying to attract external sources of funding from donors, and through bidding for work. The availability of donor funding can distort the appearance and growth of these bodies in the direction of a particular donor's agenda.

8.9 Universities in Vietnam tend to specialise in a particular sector, though it was not clear during the course of our short visit as to how strong the linkages were between sectoral universities and the ministerial departments dealing with the same topics. Certainly donors such as ADB have recently brought together water resources engineers from both the Water Resources University and from Institute of Water Resources Planning and Department of Water Resources and Hydraulic Works Management to give them a better appreciation for environmental issues in the water resources sector.

NGOs whose projects involve aspects of sea dike restoration, which includes those funded by SEADD's new project in Ha Tinh, and who draw upon the expertise of these organisations should benefit from this kind of networking through training.

8.10 The Agricultural University offers faculties in Crop Science, Animal Science and Veterinary, Farm Machinery Engineering, Agricultural Economics, Land and Water Resource Management, Graduate and Continuing Education and In-Service Training. They are also undertaking a large number of state, ministry and college level scientific research projects.

8.11 Local NGO-like 'associations' and 'institutes' which work in natural resources areas often rely on in-house expertise; they are made up of experts in the area in which they work. The two interviewed, VACVINA and Eco-Eco, also use outside experts. VACVINA uses staff from the Ministry of Agriculture (from which its members are retired) as well as from other Vietnamese universities and institutes; this assistance is given on a voluntary basis. Eco-Eco carries out projects in collaboration with foreign donors and NGOs in some cases and occasionally, through these, foreign experts are brought in. They cannot afford to pay for foreign experts except in these cases.

8.12 International NGOs often use expertise from other branches of the same NGO. There is a good deal of variation in the degree to which international NGOs use consultancy advice from outside their own organisation. Some, like HELVETAS, use foreign consultants a lot; others, like CIDSE, almost never.

8.13 Textual information is something that is not easily available in Viet Nam. There is little networking between institutions and documents are not kept in any ordered way - or at all, in many cases. Academic institutions have almost no resources to enable them to store publications and other data. The establishment of the NGO resource centre has assisted in this area, acting as a central store of relevant documents for access by NGOs.

8.14 Publication of the results of research is expensive in other countries, and this affects the possibilities for dissemination of work done by researchers in Viet Nam, both within Viet Nam and outside it. NGOs would benefit from the availability of the results of research such as that done on micro biofertilisers (see section 8.4) and on tolerance to cold in upland varieties of rice. CRES staff expressed an interest in improving their scientific writing skills so that they would be able to publish their work within Viet Nam, both in Vietnamese and in English.

9. NGO-Academic Institutions Relationships

9.1 Technical natural scientific advice from within Viet Nam is often taken on a consultancy basis, with consultants being taken on from within Government Ministries and academic institutions.

9.2 There is strong motivation on the part of employees of Ministries and academic institutions to obtain consultancy work because their salaries are quite inadequate to live on. Only the research institute CRES, which is funded from outside sources, pays a top-up to its staff in exchange for an agreement to actually work full-time at their place of work. The consultancy rates which Vietnamese scientists can obtain vary from

US$10 to more than US$100 a day, but it seems quite usual for rates of less than US$30 to be paid. There are a large number of institutions from which consultants can be taken and it is not clear to what extent NGOs are selective - indeed have the expertise to be selective - in taking from one source rather than another. It would also appear that relations between different institutions and perhaps even between individuals within the same institution are not always close and that consequently there is little networking based on such relations. Competition for consultancy work may also be a factor here; UNDP pointed out that centres and institutes will inevitably make unsubstantiated claims to being the sole source of advice about a particular subject because they want the work. This is likely to mean that sometimes NGOs do not get the most appropriate individual for the job.

9.3 NGOs, in their relationship with Ministries and academic institutions, are usually concerned with accessing appropriate knowledge for projects and not in supporting the institution involved or in furthering the research work of the institution. This is not always the case; Ford Foundation and HELVETAS, for example, have programmes which are specifically intended to strengthen the capacity of institutions. However, where a project has as its aim a field-based goal, the NGO concerned views the relationship with consultants as a utilitarian one in most cases. Cases were cited of university staff being asked by NGOs for whom they are working as consultants to sign a contract in which they state that they will not use the information obtained through work with an NGO in any other context. Staff at the Agricultural University in Hanoi indicated that they would like to see a different kind of relationship, which would assist the development of new techniques and of knowledge rather than knowledge being treated as being a finished product which can be accessed without any development. This seems to be a valid point; technologies need to be adapted and sometimes radically altered to suit different contexts, and this is very often most appropriately done in collaboration with researchers within academic institutions.

9.4 We did find one example of a productive relationship between an academic scientist and an NGO where a new technology was refined and developed through an effective collaboration between the scientific and the NGO type of expertise. Dr. Nguyen Thanh Hien of the University of Hanoi has been working on the development of a micro biofertiliser for rice for a number of years, initially supported by money from the United Nations University in Tokyo. She tried to field test it herself and found that although farming families seemed to have a positive response she was unable to go far because of her lack of expertise in dealing with the field situation and her lack of any way of expanding the use of the fertiliser. She contacted CIDSE and they began working with her in Bac Thai province. Their collaboration has been very fruitful: most of the farmers in the area in which the fertiliser was initially introduced have now taken it up. Also, the research itself was furthered through field trialling: the recipe for the fertiliser was refined in collaboration with extension staff and farming families. Currently CIDSE is, in the same area, trialling micro biofertilisers developed by Dr. Nguyen Thanh Hien for tea and vegetables.

10. Perceptions by NGOs of the Need to use Foreign Expertise in The Natural Science Area for RNR Projects

10.1 Interestingly, staff at Eco-Eco, a Vietnamese NGO-like organisation, said when we interviewed them that they would like to be able to bring in more foreign experts because they are interested in new methodologies being developed in other countries. On the other hand, staff of international NGOs generally said that they felt that it was not necessary to bring in foreign expertise.

10.2 The fact that very few foreign experts are brought in by either foreign NGOs or local NGO-like organisations does not necessarily indicate that all the necessary expertise is available locally, despite the fact that Vietnamese scientific expertise is very good. Viet Nam has been cut off from the rest of the international scientific community for a number of years and is not necessarily in contact with new developments. The mission was not able to evaluate the quality of the science used in different RNR areas within consultancies from within Viet Nam but there is the likelihood that it might in some cases be useful to supplement local science with knowledge derived from research in other parts of the world.

11. Sources of Social Scientific Advice used by NGOs in their Natural Resources Work

11.1 Where an NGO is unable to rely on its own in-house expertise in the social sciences, foreign or local expatriate expertise is often used rather than bringing in expertise from within Viet Nam (see section 12.4). All of those interviewed, both Vietnamese academics and staff of foreign NGOs, said that there is at present little expertise in these areas within Viet Nam unless it has been acquired through working with foreign NGOs.

11.2 Vietnamese social scientists at present have no real field experience. They have been required to supply `data' in the form of statistics and `facts' which are not based on any fieldwork or on minimal fieldwork. We were told by the Ford Foundation that the government required this `data' in the past; nowadays they are under similar pressure from NGOs and International Organisations. However, it would seem that many NGOs have in fact decided that they will use non-Vietnamese consultants to provide social development expertise and to work in the development of extension and generally in setting up effective communication with local communities.

12. The Lack of Local Social Development Expertise

12.1 Some NGOs are specifically targeting the lack of social development expertise in their projects and programmes. HELVETAS has given a good deal of assistance in the development of social forestry training in Viet Nam. A programme is about to be set up at a number of institutes in Vietnam, which is planning to build on a pilot project with the Social Forestry Training Centre at the Forestry College of Viet Nam. This input should be helpful in developing local expertise.

12.2 The Ford Foundation are trying to move away from the current emphasis on the provision of `data' in quantitative form and to ensure, through their support for

training in anthropological fieldwork techniques at Hanoi University Institute of Ethnology, that social scientists are trained to carry out qualitative work and to relate more directly to local people. This will enable them to work in the areas of participatory project implementation which are in demand by foreign NGOs. Ford and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) are also supporting Indigenous Knowledge research at the Research Centre for Forest Ecology and the Environment under the Forestry Science Institute of MARD (the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).

12.3 The absence of experience in social development and participatory methodologies is probably due to a large extent to the fact that until the initiation in the late 1980s of land redistribution (initially of rice land, and now, gradually, of areas used for shifting cultivation and forest land as well, a move which is perhaps intended to push farming families towards more permanent farming practices) the organisation of farming in Viet Nam was top-down. Farming families were not decision-makers and it was not necessary to negotiate or dialogue with them. Although their interests may have been taken into account by decision-makers, farming families were not formally consulted. Even now they are required to fit in with plans made at communal level with regard to which crops will be grown, and how land will be used.

13. Key Issues and Recommendations

13.1 This final section will highlight the key issues raised by the Viet Nam case study for the broader research project on NGOS and the UK RNR science base. It will also put forward for consideration some specific recommendations on DFID's approach to NGOs in Vietnam.

Availability of natural science expertise to NGOS

13.2 Most NGOs take their natural science expertise from inside Vietnam, from a number of academic and quasi-academic institutes. Most NGOs said that they are reluctant to use non-Vietnamese for expertise in natural science areas because it is unnecessary due to the high quality of Vietnamese science (but also because of Vietnamese sensitivities). Given the strong scientific tradition within Vietnam, this does not present a fundamental problem. Vietnamese expertise is supplemented with expertise from regional centres within South-East Asia, and by expertise from other programmes of the major international NGOs. *In this context, it is hard to argue that there is a major unmet demand for technical scientific expertise that could be supplied by UK institutions.*

13.3 There is, however, *an issue of the way NGOs can learn about and access this in-country expertise.* There are many different scientific institutions in Viet Nam, and NGOs often use consultants identified through rather *ad hoc* means, often through project partners. There are inconsistencies in the quality of advice available across the country and even within the same organisation. There is also a lot of competition for consultancy work, partly because of the high rewards, and we were told by international organisations that institutes and centres will inevitably make unsubstantiated claims about being the sole source of advice about a particular subject. It is likely that in many cases the best people are not obtained by NGOs because of this competition and the associated lack of networking between organisations within

Vietnam, combined with uneven availability of expertise and difficulties in some cases on the part of NGOs in assessing the expertise of consultants taken on.

13.4 It is not necessarily ideal that NGOs are largely unable to use natural science expertise from outside Viet Nam. It is likely that there are areas where they might usefully use international expertise. However, they are not always in a position to know when this might be, and might be reluctant to go straight to international experts even if they did and could afford it. The optimum scenario might be to bring in international expertise in conjunction with the use of a Vietnamese scientist, so that the science which is brought in can be tailored to local conditions most effectively - and also so that links are effectively established between Vietnamese science and international science, to the benefit of both. In the context of a period of lack of contact between Vietnam and the outside world this would be particularly valuable. In view of the sensitivities involved in NGOs' employing non-Vietnamese expertise, it may be necessary in some cases for donors to be seen to require this, and to fund it (as DFID are doing in the Ha Tinh project.)

Availability of NR-related social science expertise

13.5 There is perceived by both NGOs and staff of Ministries and academic institutions to *be a lack of local Vietnamese expertise in social development and participatory methodologies.* NGOs take on staff who are not Vietnamese to work in teams with Vietnamese scientists; such non-Vietnamese staff may be either resident or brought in from overseas. There is a need to train local Vietnamese in these areas and this is beginning to be tackled through assistance from certain NGOs - Ford Foundation and HELVETAS are notable in this respect.

NGOS' influence on the NR research agenda

13.6 *In terms of the potential for NGOs to influence the research agenda, the relationship between NGOs and Vietnamese academic institutions from which they take natural science consultants should be one of partnership* (i.e. where both parties benefit in terms of their work). However, this is not usually the case; the relationship usually involves the NGO simply using a specific individual for an input, whether this is one-off or ongoing throughout a project. Where the researcher's agenda is not taken into account it is unlikely that NGO needs will feed through into his or her research - or that the research will be effectively tailored in future to NGO field needs in specific contexts. NGOs in at least some cases have asked consultants to sign contracts which mean that the consultant is not able to use the work he/she does for the NGO in any other context, and academic staff at universities who have signed such contracts expressed a discontent with this. They would like to see their NGO work as part of their ongoing research. One good example of effective partnership between academic research and NGO field projects was found, however, where both the NGO and the researcher saw their work as having been advanced.

International networks

13.7 *NGOs in Viet Nam would benefit from access to more international networks on natural science topics, both formal and informal, with scientific institutions and other NGOs which are intended to disseminate the results of relevant NR research.* Although some NGOs do use international networks, many do not.

This points to a need both for self-scrutiny and more vigorous promotion by network organisers, and security of funding for networks of proven usefulness by donors. Some of the larger NGOs have their own system of disseminating information and the results of research from head office or from regional offices to their offices in Viet Nam, but smaller NGOs do not benefit from this. There are some local networks and groups on topics relevant to NR (in particular social forestry and sustainable agriculture and ethnic minorities) which are co-ordinated through the NGO Resource Centre, but the mission was not able to ascertain how effective these are.

In-country availability of information

13.8 There is a problem with dissemination and storage of literature and information within Viet Nam. Particularly within academic institutions, there are inadequate facilities for papers, books etc. to be kept and thus made available to NGOs or researchers. The NGO Resource Centre is helpful (and the role of similar resource centres and umbrella organisations in other countries needs to be considered in this respect) but this is an area which needs to be tackled.

Vietnam-specific recommendations

13.9 Within Viet Nam, the most important area which would benefit from financial assistance is the storage and dissemination of literature, including items such as project reports, the results of research (both that done locally and that done in other countries which is relevant) and books. Assistance might be given through ministries, academic institutions or the NGO Resource Centre; identification of the best target for assistance with regard to benefit to NGOs would need further work.

13.10 DFID should encourage NGOs which it is funding in Viet Nam, such as those under the Ha Tinh province programme, to develop fruitful partnerships with local researchers which explicitly incorporate both the researchers' and the NGOs' agendas so that both are met within the project.

13.11 DFID's country strategy for Viet Nam should involve an explicit focus on developing partnerships between local sources of scientific expertise and sources of expertise in the UK (where UK science has comparative advantage over regional sources of expertise), in order to develop the international links of the local institutions. Building on the model which is being adopted in the Ha Tinh province project, where three UK-based NGOs are being funded and expertise is being provided to assist them indirectly through the Water Resources University in Hanoi, in certain cases it might be appropriate, perhaps in the context of funding to UK NGOs working in key areas such as upland agriculture, to provide expertise direct from the UK through partnerships between local institutions and regional institutions, which could be funded directly by DFID. This avoids the problems of providing funding through NGOs.

13.12 The research institute CRES expressed an interest in developing the scientific writing skills of staff with a view to publishing the results of research locally, including to an NGO audience. This is something which should be funded for staff of CRES and other institutions in Viet Nam.

Annex 1 Selected Literature and Documents gathered during visit.

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Annex 2 - Selected Institutions and Persons Visited in Vietnam and Bangkok.

NAME OF ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION		PERSON(S) CONTACTED	KEY TOPICS OF MEETING
Multi-laterals				
SIDA	c/o Embassy of Sweden, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Dr Tran Thi Thanh Phuong , Programme Officer	Environment Fund
UNDP	UNDP, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 257495 Fax: +84 4 259267	Mr Gordon Johnson Senior Environment Officer	land allocation on forestry land,
World Food Programme	WFP, FAO, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8463896 Fax: +84 4 8232072	Mr Malcolm Duthie Adviser	NR policy & strategy; food-for-work programmes
Non Government Orgnisations (NGOs)				
Actionaid Vietnam	Ngu Xa - Ba Dinh , Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8238905 Fax: +84 4 8238946	Elizabeth McCall, Director & William Smith, Deputy Director	networking, documentation, information retrieval, project management
Care International in Vietnam	Thuy Khue , Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8457255 Fax: +84 4 8233714	Mary Picard, Agric. & NR Coordinator, Nguyen Van Dinh	NR policy and projects; work in uplands; use of outside expertise
Cooperation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidaritei(CIDSE)	Hoan Kiem District , Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8254834 Fax: +84 4 8250266	Nguyen Kim Hai , Agric. Prog. Advisor	extension; research applications
Eco-Eco , Vietnam, (Institute of Ecological Economy)	Van Mieu, Tu Giam , Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8574400 Fax: +84 4 8572697	Prof.Dr. Nguyen Van Truong, Director	establishment of eco-villages, use of foreign experts
Ford Foundation	Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 9760164 Fax: +84 4 9760163	Oscar Salemink, Program Officer	consultant support in social sciences
Groupe de Recherche et D'Echanges Technologiques (GRET)	Dong Da, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8521963 Fax: +84 4 8524980	Pascal Bergeret, Representative	country programmes, invervention methods, regional linkages, NGO status in Vietnam
HELVETAS Vietnam	G.P.O.Box,Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8431750 Fax: +84 4 8431744	Giorgio Gianinazzi, Programme Director	Social Forestry programme supported by Helvetas
Internation Union of Nature Conservation (IUCN)	Tran Hung Dao Street, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Dr Hans Friederich, Country Representative	national environmental action plan
NGO Resource Centre,	Doi Can Str, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8328570 Fax: +84 4 8328611	Odile Ruijs Director	NR literature and documents
Oxfam UK and Ireland	Doi Can Str, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Stephan Natchuk, Programme Co-ordinator	forestry land allocation and programme evaluation
Save the Children (SCF) UK	Doi Can Str, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8325319 Fax: +84 4 8325073	Joachim Theis, Deputy Director	poverty alleviation in upland areas
VACVINA - National Association of Vietnamese Gardeners	Ba Dinh District	Tel : +84 4 350488 Fax: +84 4 353144	Nguyen Ngoc Triu , President	promotion of VAC system, use of outside expertise
Vietnamese Economic Association	c/o Ly Thuong Kiet St. Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8264176 Fax: +84 4 8259786	Nguyen van Cuong, Research Team Leader for Project VIE/95/ 038	human resources surveys, local consultancies

World Vision International Vietnam	Kgoc Khanh Str.	Tel : +84 4 8345370 Fax: +84 4 8346225	David Purnell , Operations Manager	partnerships, upland areas
Universities and Colleges :				
Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok - School of Environment, Resources and Development		Tel : +66 2 5245477 Fax: +66 2 5246200	Dr Peter Edwards , Professor of Aquaculture; Dr Harvey Demaine , Coordinator of Aqu. Outreach Prog;	aquaculture extension and training in Asia
Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok - Center for Language and Educational Technology		Tel : +66 2 5245836 Fax: +66 2 5245872	Jonathan Shaw, Chairperson	teaching and learning techniques in aquaculture extension
Asian Institute of Technology Center in Vietnam	21 Le Thanh Tong St., Hanoi	+84 4 8253658	brief visit to collect literature on short courses	
Hanoi Agricultural University	Deputy Faculty of Crop Science , Dept. of Genetiics and Plant Breeding	Tel : +84 4 8276473 Fax: +84 4 8276554	Pham Huu Ton and Vu Dinh Hoa, Dept. of Genetics and Plant Breeding	upland rice extension; consultancies with NGOs; contract conditions
Hanoi Water Resources University	Dept. Science and International Cooperation; Environmental Section	Tel : +84 4 8536447 Fax: +84 4 8534198	Vu Minh Cat, Nguyen Cong Man and Nguyen Thai Hung; Dept of Science and International Co-operation.	sea dike consultancies; irrigation & drainage design procedures & local authority responsibilities; short course & full time training;
Vietnam Forestry College,	at Xuan Mai, near Hanoi		Dr Dinh Duc Thuan, Director of Social Forestry Centre.	TNA national survey in Social Forestry; regional and national forestry networks; Helvetas support for social forestry training
Hanoi National University -	Centre for Research & Env.Studies, (CRES)	Tel : +84 4 8262932 Fax: +84 4 8262932	Prof Pham Bing Quyen, Deputy Director	NGO contracts & research.
Hanoi National University	Mangrove Ecosystem Research Division (MERD)	Tel : +84 4 8438492 Fax: +84 4 8269044	Prof Phan Nguyen Hong, chief of MERD	mangrove systems in Vietnam, NGO contracts.
Hanoi National University	Program on Environment	Tel : +84 4 8227080 Fax: +84 4 8218934	Dr A. Terry Rambo, Senior Fellow, E - W Centre	ethnic minorities, uplands
University of Hanoi	Dept. of Genetics , Research Group on Nitrogen Fixation.	Tel : +84 4 8586486 Fax:	Dr Nguyen Thanh Hien	micro biofertiliser
Research Institutes and Centres :				
Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE)	National Environment Agency, Environmental Technology & EIA Division, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Mrs Chu Thi Sang, Director	EIA procedure in Vietnam at national & local levels; compendium of environmental consultants
Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	National Institute for Agricultural Planning and Projecting (NIAPP), Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Prof Vu Nang Dzung, Director and Dr Vu Cong Lan, Head of Division of Int Co-op & Proj. Man.	land use planning & evaluation; national economic zones, watershed management

MARD	National Institute for Animal Husbandry (NIAH), Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Dr Bui Thi Oanh,Head of Nutrition Department	chicken breeding for upland farmers.
MARD	Institute of Meterology and Hydrology , Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Dr Tran Thuc , specialist in Hydrollogy, Hydralulics & Coastal Engineering	climate data distribution
MARD	Institute of Water Resources Planning, Hanoi	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Dr Nguyen Trong Singh, Vice Director & MS Nguyen Thi Phuong Lam, Water Res. Planner	water resources data and collection, contracts with NGOs and Ios.
Consulting Center for Environmental Protection and Technology Transfer	Thai thinh-Dong da-, Hanoi; (independently / privately funded)	Tel : +84 4 8454824 Fax: +84 4 8232195	Prof Le Cao DAI, Director	residual effects of dioxin on the environment
Dept. of Genetics, University of Hanoi - Research Group on Nitrogen Fixation	90 Nguyen Trai, Hanoi	Tel: +84 4 8586486	Dr. Nguyen Thanh Hien	research and cooperation with the NGO CIDSE on microbiofertiliser for rice, tea and vegetables
Provincial and District Extension Offices:				
Provincial Extension Office, Thai Nguyen Province	662 Luong Ngoc Quyen Street, Thai Nguyen city	Thai Nguyen 855 582	Eng Nguyen Huy Cuong, Director	cooperation with CIDSE on extension and introduction of microbiofertilizer developed by Dr. Hien
Provincial Extension Office factory for microfertilizer	Thai Nguyen city		Mrs. Dung, Mrs. Ly and Mr. Long.	production of microfertilizer developed by Dr. Hien
District Extension Centre, Vo Nhai District, Thai Nguyen Province			Mr. Nam, Director of Agricultural and Rural Development Section, Mr. Tam, Vice-Head of District Extension Centre, Mrs. Lien, Vice Chairman of District People's Comomittee and other staff	cooperation with CIDSE on extension